commUnity+

Annual Report 2024–25

Unlocking pathways to connection



About commUnity+

Comm Unity Plus Services Ltd (commUnity+) is a multidisciplinary community organisation that has provided services, predominantly across Melbourne's north and west regions, for more than 40 years.

Our clients are people facing disadvantage, hardship and social exclusion, with particular focus on members of communities new to Australia. We support vulnerable children and women, and those who need a helping hand to achieve justice and fairness when dealing with governments and the legal system. Our team of dedicated professionals deliver our purpose to support, strengthen and enable individuals and diverse communities in Melbourne's north and west regions to flourish through respecting diversity and strive for social justice.

We endeavour to enable positive change and growth for people through a range of prevention and early-intervention programs including Community Education, Children's Contact Services, Neighbourhood House, Legal Services and community engagement and development activities.

We partner with several community, corporate and government agencies to enhance our service delivery and increase access to our services for the communities we serve.

commUnity+ is a company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient with the Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission.

Locations and services

Level 2 90 Taylors Rd, Keilor Downs 3038
Education / Legal / Corporate Services

822–824 Ballarat Road, Deer Park 3023
Education / Family / Neighbourhood / Legal

354 Main Road West, St Albans 3021
Education

5 Blucher St, Glenroy 3046
Family

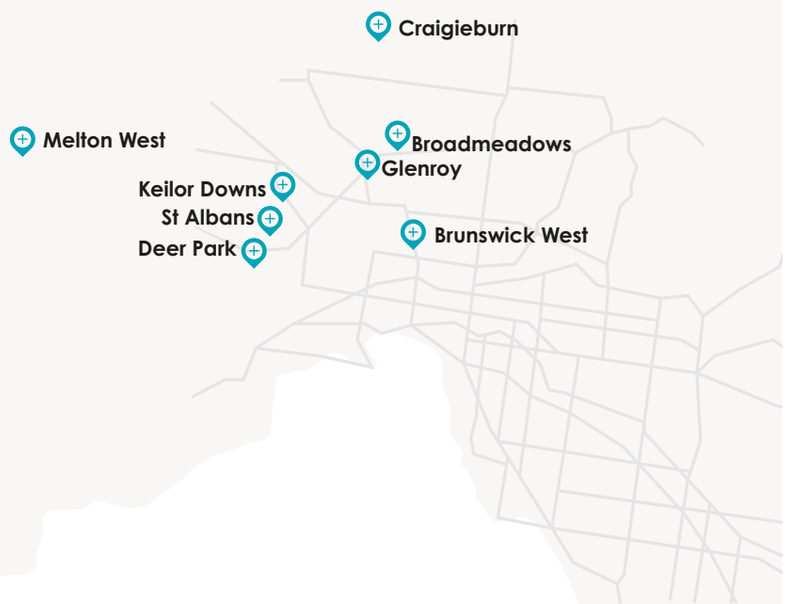
30 East Esplanade, St Albans 3021
Legal

195–209 Barries Road, Melton West 3337
Legal

2/1100 Pascoe Vale Rd Broadmeadows 3047
Education

75 Central Park Ave, Craigieburn 3064
Education

46 Grantham St, Brunswick West 3055
Family



Acknowledgement of Country

We proudly acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and provide services. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. commUnity+ acknowledges this land was never ceded; that it always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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Chair report



Things are never quiet at commUnity+ and in a year of exceptional achievements, my personal highlight was undoubtedly the launch of the commUnity+ 2025–28 Strategy. We celebrated this, together with the opening of our new commUnity+ Legal office, with our stakeholders and partners at an event in May. It highlighted our passion and client focus and reminded us that we are not alone in this journey. Our many guests shared encouragement and commitment to our success and to our clients.

The 2025–28 Strategic Plan was developing with the deep engagement from the commUnity+ Board, Senior Leadership Team and leaders across the organisation, our Community Advisory Committee, and key stakeholders. We thank PivotSpace for their role in facilitating our strategic plan development journey and we thank the many stakeholders who provided honest and thoughtful input.

I believe that the commUnity+ 2025–28 Strategy marks and celebrates a significant point in the commUnity+ story. As an organisation with a long and rich history, commUnity+ has grown and evolved over time. Among all the change, the organisation has always proudly maintained the same core purpose: to unlock pathways and assist people to access the services and support they need to lead the lives they want. We are delighted to continue in this same tradition, using new opportunities and ideas to deliver on that same promise. I am grateful to my colleagues on the Board, the senior leadership team and the stakeholders who gave generously of their time, insights and ideas about the role that commUnity+ could play in empowering and supporting people and communities.

As an organisation, our staff reflect the people, families and communities we work with – their lived experience, diversity, priorities, needs and aspirations. As in previous years, we are proud to report on our staff diversity data, the number of languages spoken and, particularly, the percentage of our staff for whom commUnity+ has provided their first employment opportunity in Australia.

Within the context of continued tightening of Commonwealth and State Government fiscal policy, during this financial year commUnity+ has maintained funding streams for our core programs. To better respond to areas of unmet need, we have secured grant funding for cross-program projects, enabling us to better serve the communities we work with including people experiencing family violence and those settling in high-growth regions such as Melton. Targeted investment has focused on strengthening organisational foundations, facilities and embedding lived experience in our program design.

As we begin to operationalise our ambitious 2025–28 Strategy, I remain inspired and energised by commUnity's commitment to empowerment, inclusion and participation, and to overcoming cycles of disadvantage within communities rich in cultural diversity across Melbourne's west and north. I have no doubt that with the incredible support we receive we can make this a reality.

Jackie Mead
Chair



CEO report



Centring the lived experience, perspectives and aspirations of the people, families and communities we work with remains the unifying principle underpinning our ambition and driving our programs and services, activities and initiatives at commUnity+ throughout 2024-25. I am proud that, with the development of our 2025–28 Strategy, we have embedded this through our core organisational value of compassion.

Alongside our new Strategy, and as highlighted throughout this document, we unveiled our refreshed commUnity+ brand family during the year, aligning who we are, the integrated and holistic role we play and our 'any door' approach to connecting people to services.

Our **commUnity+ Education** portfolio celebrated a 17% increase in student course completions, opening doors to opportunity for 1042 adult migrant community members across Melbourne's greater west and north. commUnity+ invested significantly in our digital learning platform and student information system to better support our students. Our Skills for Education and Employment program, delivered as part of the Learning for Employment consortia, entered into a new four-year funded cycle.

commUnity+ Legal moved from strength to strength as we focused our advocacy and services on addressing the complex unmet needs of community members across the Melbourne's expanding West reaching out to Melton. Programs like the Melton Family Violence Project and Family Law Access Project enabled the provision of legal services to victim-survivors of family violence, achieving a 140% increase in settlements for victim-survivors of family violence – each settlement achieved opened a door to freedom, safety and a brighter future.

commUnity+ Neighbourhood, the front door to our holistic community strengthening portfolio is vibrant, diverse and welcoming. We expanded program offerings and alignment with community needs and interests. The Melton Community Empowerment project is connecting people and families to commUnity+ services through local community groups and networks. Our continuing Patch to Plate program is helping community members overcome food insecurity and increase independence. The launch of our first dedicated school holiday activities program is providing families with a safe, welcoming place to experience creative workshops and hands-on activities.

commUnity+ Family has three Children's Contact Services operating at full capacity, serving a large geographic region across Melbourne's West and North. Testament to our approach of centring the safety and wellbeing of the children attending the service, 93% of children and young people who gave feedback said they enjoyed their visit and wanted to return. Our service quality was recognised with a Japanese delegation visit to our Glenroy Children's Contact Service and St Albans Legal office, where they learned about the role of Children's Contact Services and family law as Japan introduces new developments in family law.

The heavy lifting that goes on behind the scenes is immense, like the Right Fit for Risk project, which strengthened our enterprise information security infrastructure, policy and practice, and our Workplace Gender Equality Agency reporting, a significant milestone affirming our gender inclusive workforce and efforts. Our staff APPLAUSE program celebrates the often-unheralded contribution of our staff, one of our many employee engagement and wellbeing initiatives.

Our impact in the community happens because of the amazing people at commUnity+ including the Board of Directors, our Senior Leadership Team, our expert practice leawders, our corporate, people and culture and administration staff, volunteers and especially our frontline staff across all our programs and services, the latter of which have come together in the new community and client services division. Our team approach, work with funders and partners, welcoming spaces and places, and systems and tools are all channelled towards better outcomes for our service users.

Of the many highpoints in the past year, the creation and subsequent unveiling of the '*Window to the Future*' mosaic mural with the words *uplifting, strengthening, enabling*, painted by our staff for the communities we serve, captures our 'why'. I'm grateful to be surrounded by the most wonderful team at commUnity+, thank you.

Tracey Gaudry
Chief Executive Officer

Our impact 2024–25

1042

Course completions

Up 17% from 2023–24

$2,359,440

Value of family law property settlements

Up 139% from 2023–24

$181,360

Value of fines/ debts waived

Up 24% from 2023–24

757

Children's Contact Service Clients Supported

Up 13% from 2023–24

commUnity+ education legal neighbourhood family







Our strategy

Who We Are

We are an organisation who **works alongside** and **cares deeply** for communities in **Melbourne's west** and **north.**

We provide services and support across the areas of community building, community education, community legal, family services.

Our Vision

For all people, families and communities to thrive.

Our Purpose

We empower and support people by unlocking pathways to connection, learning, work and justice.

Our Values

Empowerment

We respect the strength of our communities and support people to have agency over their own lives.

Compassion

We embrace the lived experience of all people and approach our work with kindness, care and courage.

Collaboration

We work well together as one team and with our partners to deliver holistic services.

Responsiveness

We listen to our diverse communities, measure impacts and make informed decisions about the services we provide.

Accountability

We are responsible and self-reflective. We acknowledge and celebrate achievements.

Strategic priorities 2025–28

What you can expect from commUnity+ over the 2025–28 period includes:

Make services easier to access and use, online and in person

Support for more communities in Melbourne's Greater west and north

Programs and services informed by listening to community members about what they need

Create an 'any door' approach where people are connected with the services they need, no matter how they first contact us

Expand education programs to help people find jobs, further their education and connect with others

Work with other services so people with complex needs get full support



Train local leaders and run community projects together

Create more practical short courses to help people know their rights and feel more confident

Start a 10-year plan to better use technology to improve our effectiveness and ways of supporting people, families and communities

Regular evaluation of our programs and services to ensure that we are making apositive difference for people, families and communities.













Serving an area of need

With a large and diverse population, Melbourne's western suburbs is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. Western Melbourne has a diverse labour market profile, presenting strong job opportunities in growth industries and skills-in-demand sectors; however, the region also has a history of low employment and social challenges. The proportion of the working age population on income support in the region is higher than the Victorian average. Young people represent a large percentage of the Workforce Australia caseload in the western suburbs of Melbourne. Foundation skills, such as literacy, numeracy and digital proficiency, are lacking in some participant groups, such as young people, culturally and linguistically diverse people and First Nations, and this impacts employment opportunities.




Tracey Gaudry
Chief Executive Officer
Jackie Mead
Chair of the Board

Our governance and leadership

Board of Directors

commUnity+ is governed by an elected, voluntary Board of Directors. The Board may comprise up to eleven Directors under the Constitution.

Our Directors act in the best interests of commUnity+ in accordance with the statutory duties under the Corporations Act 2001 and the commUnity+ Board Charter.

During 2024–25 we farewelled Olivia Joel as an outgoing Director. Olivia contributed immensely in her role as Director and we thank her for her tireless efforts over several years.

There are three subcommittees of the Board:

- Finance Audit and Risk Management Committee
- Governance Committee
- Community Advisory Committee

Leadership

The Senior Leadership Team comprises five executive management positions:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Executive Director, Client Services
- General Manager, Community Education
- Head of People and Culture

During 2024–25 we farewelled Cameron Bloye as outgoing General Manager, Family Services. Our sincere thanks to Cameron, who made a significant impact during his tenure with commUnity+, including contributing to many of the initiatives and outcomes contained in this report.

The Leadership Team comprises employees with people and/or program management responsibilities across all our portfolios.

The Board of Directors, Senior Leadership Team and Leadership Team meet regularly, both formally and informally, and are supported by our Executive Administrator, Deepika Sharma.

Our Board



Jackie Mead
Chair

Jackie was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2020 and became the Chair of the Board in December 2022. Jackie is a member of the Governance Committee.

Jackie is a long-time resident of Melbourne's inner west and has a passion for creating and supporting vibrant communities that are inclusive and compassionate at their core. She brings more than 15 years of not-for-profit experience, along with a background in consulting and HR.

Jackie is currently the CEO of the national community legal service, Knowmore Legal Service.



Emma Hunt
Deputy Chair

Emma was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2020 and the role of Deputy Chair in 2022. Emma is a member of the Governance Committee. Emma is an Associate Director in Legal Practice, Victoria Legal Aid (VLA). Emma is an experienced lawyer and manager with over 25 years' experience in leadership roles across the legal, not-for-profit, statutory agency and government sectors in Australia and overseas.

Emma is passionate about social justice and is dedicated to supporting community services that make a difference in the lives of people living in Melbourne's west and north.



Nella Buccheri

Nella was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2016. Nella is a member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee.

Nella is a senior lawyer, and throughout her career, Nella has developed legal expertise in criminal law, administrative law and litigation. Nella has particular skills in exercising public power, specifically administrative law decision-making.

Nella is a local resident with a strong interest in social justice. She is an advocate for the work of commUnity+ in local communities and is committed to improving service provision in the western suburbs.



Poonam Fernandes
Treasurer

Poonam was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2022. Poonam is the Treasurer and Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee. Poonam currently works for the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as the acting Chief Finance Officer. She has also held several senior finance positions at the Department of Health and has industry experience in Government, Non-profit Organisations, Mining & Resources and Financial Services.



Kristie Lawson

Kristie was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2022. Kristie is a member of the Governance Committee. Kristie is working as Director Corporate Services at Central Highland Rural Health.

Kristie has well-developed skills in stakeholder management, project management and leadership, with several years of experience leading teams in the public sector working across both State and local government.



Susanne Legena

Susanne was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2016. Susanne was a member of the Governance Committee until September 2023 and joined the Community Advisory Committee in March 2024.

Susanne is the CEO of Plan International Australia providing emergency response and international development programs, in partnership with local organisations, for children and young people in more than 80 countries. Additionally, Susanne serves as the Board Chair for the Emergency Action Alliance, a consortium of 15 leading aid organisations in Australia. Prior to joining Plan International she was Chief of Staff to the Victorian Minister for Energy, Resources and Community Development and the Arts. Susanne has dedicated her career to working on social justice issues, children's rights, and inequality.



Jayne Nelson

Jayne was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2024. Jayne has a diverse industry background, having worked as an executive leader in health, higher education, marketing and advertising. She often draws on her experience in these industries to find creative solutions to complex issues. Jayne has a strong track record of empowering teams to deliver quality services for people in local communities with diverse backgrounds. Jayne is the CEO of IPC Health, a not-for-profit community health organisation.



Martina Otten

Martina was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2024 and is a member of the Governance Committee. She is the Executive Director of the Faculty of Pain Medicine at the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and is committed to improving equity, fostering diversity and strengthening outcomes for communities.

Martina brings extensive experience in governance, strategy and stakeholder engagement across health, education and research and is recognised for shaping policy and building trusted relationships with government and sector partners.



Valerie Sace

Valerie was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2022. Valerie is the Chair of the Community Advisory Committee. Valerie is Head of Strategy & Transformation at David Jones.

She is a highly commercial strategy, transformation and project management leader with experience across diverse industries including retail, digital media, FMCG, waste management and community services. Valerie is passionate about the work of community organisations that seek to empower people affected by disadvantage and inequality in the community.



Damien Smith

Damien was appointed to the commUnity+ Board in 2024. Damien is well-versed in governance, risk management and strategy, and brings over 25 years of executive experience in cybersecurity, technology and risk with large and medium-sized organisations. He has provided cybersecurity consulting to several organisations. A long-term resident of the west, Damien is passionate about equality, diversity and opportunity for all community members.

Our Senior Leadership Team



Tracey Gaudry
Chief Executive Officer

Tracey is an accomplished leader with over 20 years of experience in executive and governance roles. Previous CEO roles for community and for-purpose organisations include Respect Victoria and the Amy Gillett Foundation. Her governance roles have included Vice President Union Cycliste Internationale, where she chaired the global Women's and Advocacy Commissions, and Director of Sports Environment Alliance. Her leadership has focused on prevention and early intervention research, policy and program/ delivery initiatives supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in local, regional, national and international settings and communities.

Tracey is dedicated to supporting and enhancing the diverse communities that commUnity+ serves, and brings significant knowledge, experience, insights and energy.



Remberto Rivera
Chief Operating Officer

Remberto joined commUnity+ in January 2024, bringing more than 25 years' experience working in the for-purpose sector.

Remberto previously worked at ACSO for 12 years as CFO while carrying responsibilities for Facilities and Administration, IT and McCormack Housing (ACSO's Housing Provider subsidiary). Prior to ACSO, he was Corporate Services and Business Development Director at Bairnsdale Regional Health. He also spent ten years with UnitingCare Connections as Corporate Services Director where he led the organisation to consolidate a merger of three smaller agencies into Connections. A migrant from El Salvador, Remberto commenced his professional career in Australia with The Salvation Army.

Remberto has a special interest in not-for-profit governance and is currently a Board Director and Chair of Foundation House (the Victorian Association for the Survivors of Torture Inc), a specialist refugee trauma agency supporting survivors of torture and other traumatic events.

Remberto's qualifications include a Bachelor's degree in Economics (Honours), Post Graduate Diploma in Business (Accounting) from Deakin University, Post Graduate Diploma in Aged Care Management from Victoria University, and a Master of Business Administration from Deakin University. Remberto is a fully qualified CPA and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD).



Lauren Palma
Executive Director, Client Services

Lauren is an accomplished leader with over 20 years of experience in community services programs including justice, education, NDIS and family violence. She has worked in both public and private secondary school education, vocational education and adult education. She has previously held leadership roles at No to Violence, Able Australia, Melbourne City Mission and within the education sector.

Lauren's leadership has focused on direct client service delivery, advocacy, program initiatives and development, contract management, sector support, training and education, and stakeholder management. Lauren has led teams in Local, State and National roles.

Lauren is passionate about supporting people to be the best version of themselves and about providing opportunities to more vulnerable cohorts to support people and communities to thrive. She is passionate about trauma-informed and person-centred care and recognises the value and need for co-design within the community services sector.

Lauren is passionate about collaboration as a driver for success and places importance on stakeholder engagement to improve opportunities for participants.

Lauren holds a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a post-graduate diploma in education.



Mabel Msopero
General Manager, Community Education

Mabel has been engaged in the education sector for more than 35 years, including private and public high school education, adult and community education, higher education, vocational education and training in TAFE and private Registered Training Organisations. Mabel's roles in education have included classroom teacher, program manager, head of department.

Mabel's passion for community education comes from her belief that no one is an empty vessel, and everyone brings something to the table and together we can build a beautiful and well-informed community. Mabel is, and has always been, an active member of her community wherever she lives.

She has held voluntary roles as Board Member Auckland Asylum Seekers Support Trust, Member Auckland Council Ethnic People Advisory, Founder Member of the New Zealand Based Trust – Sharing Used Resources for Education (SURE). Mabel is an active member of the Wyndham Council Building Blocks Community Leadership Program 2023 – Allies in the Community Project, and the Wyndham Council People's Advisory Panel.



Nimeshika Peiris
Head of People and Culture

Nim Peiris is a values-driven People & Culture leader with over 20 years of experience across the not-for-profit, corporate, and manufacturing sectors. Prior to joining commUnity+ in 2019, Nim held senior human resources roles at Bulla Dairy Foods, NDB Bank and Brandix Group, where she led large-scale change and organisational development initiatives. Her career has been shaped by a deep commitment to inclusive leadership, cultural transformation and building environments where people feel a deep sense of belonging. Nim is known for her strategic thinking, and ability to lead with integrity-qualities that continue to shape her leadership at commUnity+ and beyond.



commUnity+ education

Across all the delivery sites, we continued to focus on the provision of services to clients facing disadvantage and social exclusion, and those in communities new to Australia.



commUnity+ Education



This year has been one of growth, resilience and innovation as we continued to support our learners to achieve their educational and employment goals.

commUnity+ is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) with more than 30 years' experience providing adult education classes to our community. Over the past 12 months, we had more than 1600 student enrolments in our programs, which range from English language and digital literacy to vocational training pathways funded under the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE), Adult Community Further Education (ACFE), Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and Skills First programs.

Our impact

Financial year	Adult Community Further Education (ACFE)	Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)	Skills for Education and Employment (SEE)	Skills First	Total enrolments
2023–24	679	563	342	306	1890
2024–25	804	519	253	121	1697

Graduation

Celebrating achievements is a core value at commUnity+ Education. This can be achievement across the whole organisation, in individual portfolios, staff celebrating their colleague's achievements and other forms of success. In February 2025, we proudly hosted our first-ever graduation ceremony, marking a significant milestone for our learners and the organisation.

This event was more than a celebration of certificates. It was a moment of reflection and transition, symbolising the end of one chapter and the beginning of new opportunities. Joined by graduating students and their families, we honoured their dedication, growth, and resilience. Many graduates are now continuing their learning journeys through further study pathways offered at commUnity+, demonstrating the lasting impact of our programs.





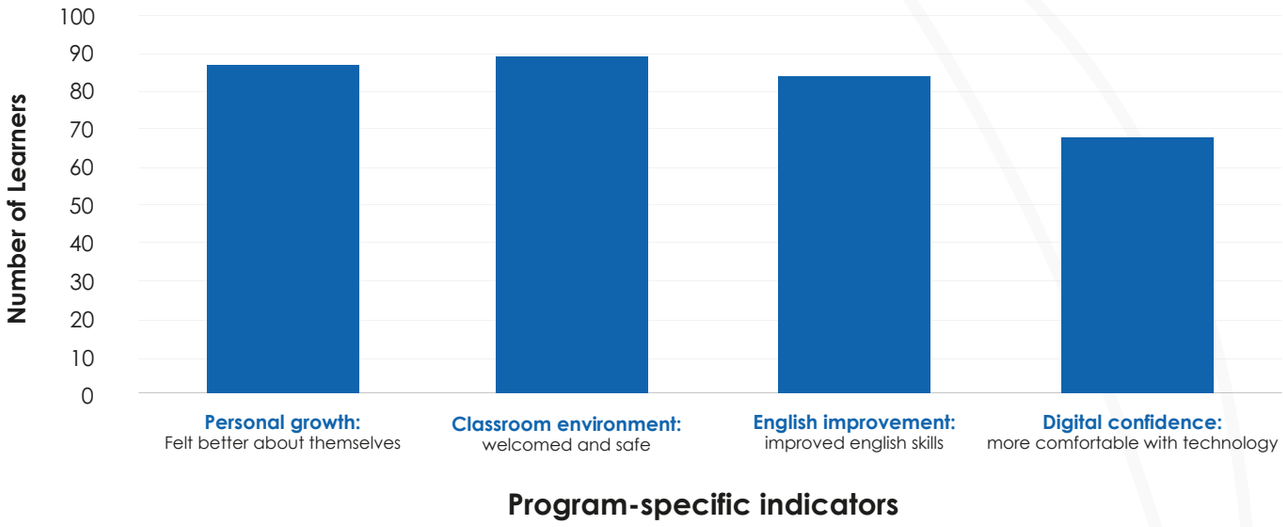




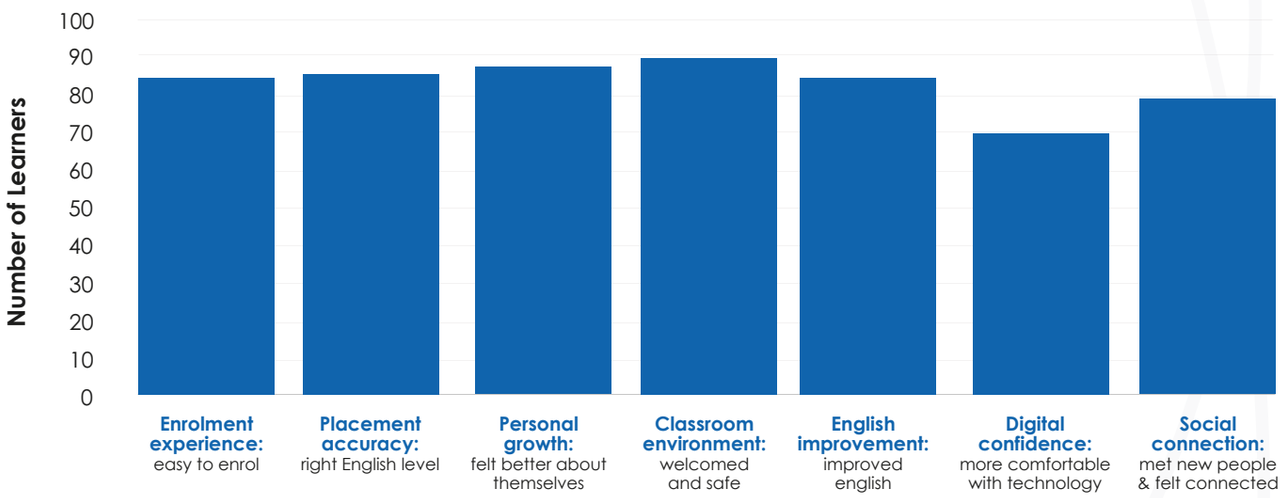
Learner sentiment and outcomes

We are especially proud of the strong learner outcomes reported through our recent surveys, with over 85 per cent of students saying they felt welcomed, supported and better equipped for the future. Across key experience indicators, most learners responded positively.

Learner sentiment



Learner sentiment highlights (positive responses %)



This reporting period has also marked significant progress in strengthening our partnerships with community organisations, employers and local councils. A new role, Stakeholder Engagement Officer, was created to focus on connecting with our referral partners and stakeholders.

These collaborations have ensured that our programs remain responsive to the needs of learners and aligned with workforce demands, particularly in the health and community services sector.

Digital transformation

In response to student survey feedback highlighting the need for improved digital literacy and streamlined processes, commUnity+ has implemented online enrolments through the aXcelerate student management system. This platform simplifies the enrolment experience by enabling learners to register online, submit documentation, and sign forms digitally. Beyond enrolment, aXcelerate offers a suite of features that enhance the student journey, including integrated learning management tools, automated compliance reporting, mobile access and workflow automation.

As commUnity+ continues to focus on a new cohort of learners with evolving needs, the organisation is taking proactive steps to align its internal systems and processes. A key focus has been on integrating aXcelerate with Xero, our financial management platform, to ensure seamless coordination between student enrolments, course delivery, and financial operations. This integration supports accurate invoicing, funding reconciliation, and real-time reporting, enabling staff to work more efficiently and make data-informed decisions.

These digital advancements reflect commUnity+'s commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring that both learners and staff benefit from a more connected, responsive and future-ready education environment.

We would like to thank our dedicated education staff, volunteers and community partners whose commitment and passion make our work possible. Most importantly, we acknowledge our students, whose determination and achievements inspire us every day. Together, we are building stronger, more inclusive communities through the power of education.

Program updates

Adult Migrant English Program

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provides free English language tuition to help migrants and humanitarian entrants settle successfully in Australia. Through AMEP, students build essential skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, while also learning about Australian culture, community and everyday life. The program not only supports settlement, but also opens pathways to further study, employment and active participation in society.



At commUnity+, AMEP is delivered across three sites – St Albans, Deer Park and Keilor Downs. Our classes are designed to be supportive, inclusive and responsive to the needs of learners. Teachers create opportunities for students to practise English in real-life contexts, build confidence, and engage with their local communities.

The 2024–25 year was one of connection, celebration and growth, as students participated in excursions, cultural events and career-focused programs that enriched their learning, fostered belonging and prepared them for the future.
In September, our learners embraced Adult Learners Week in a variety of ways. Some classes brought in traditional food to share, while others went on excursions, highlighting the richness and diversity of our community. In the same month, we recognised RU OK? Day, where students participated in activities to raise awareness about mental health and the importance of looking out for one another.

In November, students took part in commemorating Remembrance Day. Classes reflected on the sacrifices of those who served in war, explored the history and significance of the day and shared personal stories and reflections. It was a meaningful opportunity for learners to deepen their understanding of Australian history while coming together to honour and remember.

In March, students marked International Women's Day, recognising the achievements of women in their communities and beyond. In April, we celebrated Harmony Week with activities that showcased cultural diversity and encouraged mutual understanding among learners of all backgrounds.

A key highlight of the year was the delivery of the Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET) program in Term 4 of 2024 and Term 2 of 2025. This program provides learners with practical job-related language and employability skills. Students attended the Job Showcase during Brimbank Careers Week, heard from a Migrant Workers Centre speaker on *Know Your Rights at Work*, and met with Mr Basem Abdo, the newly appointed Federal MP for Calwell. Importantly, all participants undertook two-week work placements, giving them valuable hands-on experience and a bridge to future employment opportunities.

In February 2025, we proudly hosted our Community Education Graduation Ceremony at the Brimbank Aquatic and Wellness Centre. The ceremony



recognised the achievements of students who completed Certificate II and III in EAL as well as the SLPET program. It also acknowledged the contributions of our dedicated commUnity+ Education volunteers. For many learners, this event marked a significant milestone in their educational journey, offering both recognition of their hard work and encouragement to pursue further goals.

Throughout the year, our teachers extended learning beyond the classroom with excursions to a range of cultural and historical sites, including the State Library of Victoria, Fitzroy Gardens, National Gallery of Victoria and Parliament House, among others. These experiences gave students opportunities to practice English in real-world settings while enhancing their understanding of Australian history, culture, and community life.

We also continued to support learners outside the regular term structure by offering AMEP holiday classes in January and April. Designed for both lower and higher-level learners, these sessions focused on practical settlement themes.

January classes covered *Living in Australia* for beginner students and *Australian Culture* for advanced learners, while April sessions explored *Celebrations* and *Travelling*. Student feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many appreciating the opportunity to continue learning during the holidays and finding the content highly relevant to their daily lives.

Importantly, this year also saw the success of student-led initiatives, including a yoga session run by learners themselves. These activities not only fostered leadership and confidence but also demonstrated the supportive, collaborative spirit that thrives within our classrooms.

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, we are proud of the resilience, curiosity and commitment our learners have shown. Their journeys continue to inspire us, and the programs and initiatives delivered in 2024–25 highlight our ongoing commitment to supporting settlement, education and pathways to employment.

Student spotlight



Nurturing Mami's vocation

Mami Mori began her AMEP journey in February 2023 with Box Hill Institute, where she was initially assessed at Certificate II level. In April 2024, she joined commUnity+ and began studying part-time at Keilor Downs. From the start, Mami embraced the class atmosphere, appreciating the supportive environment created by both her teacher and classmates. She noted that their encouragement, along with the structured learning, helped her improve her grammar, vocabulary and overall communication skills. Over time, she developed greater confidence in expressing herself in English.

During one of her classes, Mami learned about the Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET) program and was immediately interested. She enrolled in Term 4 2024, attending four days a week, and successfully completed the program in December 2024. Knowing her passion was to work with children and families, commUnity+ arranged a placement for her at St Albans Primary School. This experience provided valuable insights into the Australian workplace and gave Mami the chance to further strengthen her communication skills by interacting with teachers, students and parents.

After completing SLPET, Mami continued with her AMEP studies. Her progress was evident, and by the Placement Test in May 2025, she was reassessed at Certificate III level. Reflecting on her journey, Mami shared that AMEP and SLPET helped her become more confident, fluent and sociable, giving her the skills and self-assurance to pursue her goals.

With a clear career path in mind, Mami applied for the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care at Victoria University and was thrilled to be offered a place, commencing in July 2025. She describes AMEP and SLPET as "a really good pathway to achieve my goals" and is excited to continue her learning journey while working towards a career supporting children and families.

Skills for Education and Employment

The federally funded Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) initiative provides high-quality education and training in language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills, supporting eligible jobseekers – including youth, mature-age participants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to pursue further education or employment pathways.

commUnity+ continues to benefit from a dedicated team of educators whose commitment to student success remains a cornerstone of the program. These professionals consistently deliver above and beyond academic instruction, offering emotional support and mentorship that significantly enriches the educational experience with further support from our Participant Support Officer. Through tailored instructions and a commitment to student success, SEE teachers foster confidence, independence and lifelong learning. Their unwavering dedication ensures that every learner receives the guidance and encouragement needed to achieve their goals, whether in further education, employment or active participation in the community.

This achievement reinforces our strategic commitment to inclusive education and workforce development, and reinforces our position as a trusted provider in the adult education sector.

Student spotlight

Shabana's recipe for success

Shabana's educational journey through the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program has been both inspiring and transformative. Enrolled in the Certificate II in English as an Additional Language, Shabana demonstrated a strong commitment to improving her language skills while nurturing her lifelong passion for cooking and international cuisine.

With prior experience working in commercial kitchens and having written two cookbooks, Shabana brought a wealth of culinary knowledge to the classroom. As her confidence in English grew, supported by the encouragement and guidance of her teachers, she successfully applied to study the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery at her local TAFE.

Shabana is now thriving in her new course and is excited about the future. She looks forward to graduating in 2026 and hopes to apply her skills in a community-focused setting, such as a childcare centre or aged care facility, where she can combine her love of cooking with meaningful service to others.

We congratulate Shabana on her achievements and wish her continued success in all her future endeavours.



Student spotlight

From student to supporter

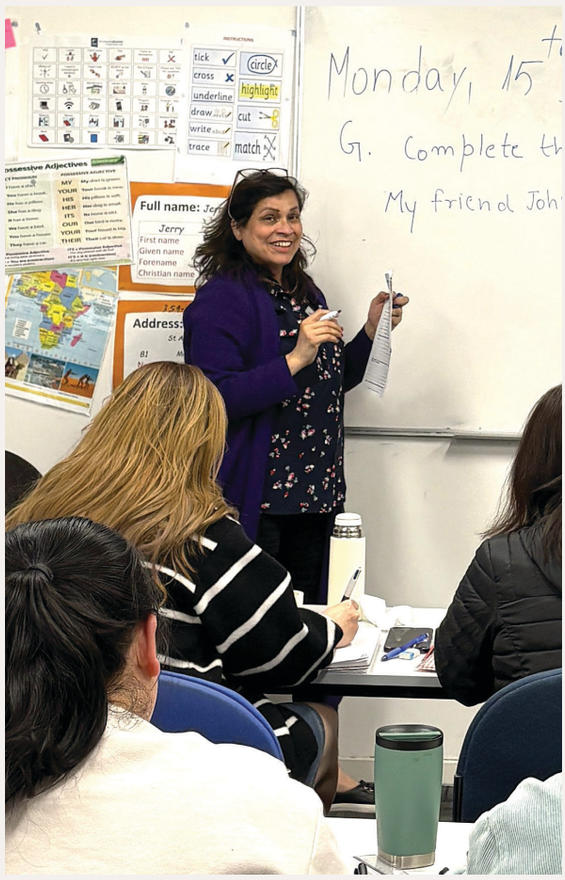
Originally from Delhi, India, Shailja relocated to Australia nine years ago, bringing with her a strong desire to adapt, learn, and contribute meaningfully to her new environment.

In 2022, Shailja began studying English through the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program at commUnity+. Her determination to improve her language skills was matched by her enthusiasm for learning and personal development. Over time, she gained confidence and fluency, becoming an active and engaged learner at commUnity+.

Recognising the transformative impact of education, Shailja transitioned from student to volunteer in August 2024, joining commUnity+ to support mixed-level English learners in the classroom. Her approach is marked by empathy, patience and a genuine willingness to share her own learning experiences. She consistently demonstrates a strong sense of responsibility and care, offering tailored support to students who require additional attention.

Driven by a long-term goal of becoming an English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher, Shailja enrolled in a Certificate IV in TESOL in May 2025. This formal training is bringing Shailja one step closer to achieving her dream.

Shailja's journey from learner to volunteer exemplifies the power of education and community support. Her dedication to lifelong learning and her aspiration to uplift others through language education make her a valuable contributor to commUnity+ and a promising future educator.



Skills First

The Skills First program is funded by the Victorian State Government, offering subsidised education and training for eligible students. commUnity+ provides English as an Additional Language (EAL) training in the western suburbs of St Albans and Keilor Downs.

commUnity+ offered six qualifications in EAL in the 2024–25 financial year: Course in Initial EAL, Course in EAL, Certificate I in EAL (Access), Certificate II in EAL (Access), Certificate III in EAL (Access) and Certificate III in EAL (Employment).

The Skills First program underwent significant changes this year, including the decision to discontinue classes at Blackburn and Broadmeadows, and to concentrate efforts on strengthening the program in the western suburbs. As a result, the program's focus shifted toward enhancing the quality of delivery and preparing for an expanded scope of registration. In February 2025, commUnity+ submitted all necessary documentation to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to include the new qualification in the scope of registration.

Our dedicated teaching staff use clear communication, practical learning activities and real-life examples to help students build language skills and confidence. The Skills First teachers understand the different backgrounds and goals of each learner, provide extra help when needed and encourage students to ask questions, work together and keep improving. Most importantly, our teachers help learners feel proud of their progress and prepare them for work, further study and everyday life in the community.



Our dedicated teaching staff use clear communication, practical learning activities and real-life examples to help students build language skills and confidence.

Looking ahead

We have made progress in assessing the viability of offering the Certificate III in Individual Support having gained approval to list it and with the support of Djerrwarrh who have agreed we can use their simulation facility.

We will also be looking at opportunities to expand our offering even further into more vocationally oriented training such as small business, hospitality, cafe skills and other exciting fields.







Student spotlight

Jialian's journey of growth and connection

Jialian arrived in Australia from China in 2009, driven by a simple but powerful goal: "I would like to change my life and have better opportunities." Fluent in Cantonese and Mandarin, and with some Vietnamese, Jialian brought with her a rich cultural background and a strong desire to build a better future for herself and her family.

Now enrolled in the Certificate III in EAL (Access), Jialian is committed to improving her English skills to fully participate in life in Australia. "I think: I live in Australia, and I have to speak well and understand," she explains. Whether it's visiting the doctor for herself or her son, or preparing to communicate with teachers when her son starts school, Jialian knows that language is key to confidence and independence.

The EAL course is helping Jialian in many ways. "It helps with looking for a better job," she says. "Helps me talking nicely with people, speak full sentences with people." She is also concurrently studying Certificate III in Individual Support with another organisation, a course which she expects to complete next year. Her goal is to work part-time and continue learning English two days a week to keep improving.

Jialian enjoys her classes and speaks warmly about her experience: "My teacher is good and helps me. I have friends in class who I can talk to in English. Learning with games is easy to understand. We talk about news, because we need to know what is happening."

Jialian's story is a testament to the power of education in transforming lives. Her determination, combined with the support of her teachers and classmates, is paving the way for a future filled with opportunity, connection, and growth.



commUnity+ legal



commUnity+ Legal

Our service data shows that our Centre increased its overall service delivery by nearly 10 per cent over 2024–25, further broadening and expanding our impact in the community.

commUnity+ Legal also further ensured that our services were almost always targeted to priority client groups, meaning that our assistance was provided to those members of the community who need it most.

commUnity+ Legal provides free legal services and community development and engagement activities to people who live, work or study in the Brimbank, Melton and Bacchus Marsh communities.

commUnity+ Legal has a focus on early intervention and the provision of holistic legal services, and we aim to improve the lives of community members experiencing marginalisation and disadvantage by addressing their legal and related social issues.

commUnity+ Legal has a main office in St Albans and conducts outreach legal services and activities across the western region in collaboration with a number of key partner organisations, including:

- Australian Vietnamese Women's Association
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Melton Health and Community Services
- The Orange Door
- Brimbank Aquatic and Wellness Centre
- Sunshine Hospital (Western Health)
- cohealth Needle and Syringe Program
- Sunshine Family Relationship Centre

commUnity+ Legal's key areas of legal practice include family law, family violence, infringements, debt matters, motor vehicle accidents, criminal law, tenancy and minor criminal law matters.

commUnity+ Legal's community development and engagement activities include:

- Community legal education sessions for community members
- Professional development training for staff of community services
- Secondary consultations for staff of community services (to assist them in identifying and referring clients for legal support)
- Law reform and advocacy activities
- Regular attendance at community events.

Our impact



A total of

$129,552

in fines and debts waived for commUnity+ Legal clients



A total of

$2,359,440

achieved in family law property settlements for CU+ Legal clients

2075 legal services delivered to **1507** clients



Measure		2023–24	2024–25
% of legal services to priority client groups:	Victim-Survivors Of Family Violence	59%	67%
	Clients Experiencing Homelessness	18%	22%
	Clients With A Disability Or Mental Health Condition	28%	27%
	Clients Born Overseas	53%	54%
	Non-Native English Speakers	39%	39%
	Aboriginal Or Torres Strait Islander Clients	3%	3%
	Clients In At Least One Of These Priority Groups	92%	95%
	Clients Experiencing Financial Hardship	-	85%
Community services delivery	Community Legal Education Sessions	34	15
	Professional Development Sessions To Non-Legal Professionals	12	2
	Service Presentations (Informing Local Organisations Of Community+ Legal's Services)	16	26

New office

commUnity+ Legal moved into our new office premises in October 2024. Located in the heart of St Albans, our new office has a more open and welcoming entrance, along with street frontage to ensure greater accessibility and visibility. Our new office ensures our clients and staff have the best possible space that properly reflects the value and importance of our work, and provides a welcoming and professional environment for clients that upholds and promotes their dignity.



Brand refinement

CommUnity+ underwent a brand refinement exercise in early 2025, with our Centre re-branding itself from Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre to commUnity+ Legal as part of this process. This next iteration of our identity reflects the holistic approach that we take to assist our clients with their issues, and links to the wrap-around support clients can be provided by commUnity+ Legal in conjunction with other commUnity+ programs.

We launched our new identity, and officially opened our new office space, by hosting an event for our partners and supporters in May. Attendees included State Members of Parliament, key stakeholders, community members, commUnity+ Board members and staff representing all commUnity+ programs. Featuring a Welcome to Country by Uncle Shane Charles and speeches by Minister Natalie Suleyman MP, Steve McGhie MP, our Board Chair Jackie Mead, CEO Tracey Gaudry and Manager/Principal Lawyer Nicholas Pagonis, the event was a wonderful night and well received by all.



Funding advocacy

As we continue to recognise the increasing levels of unmet legal and social need within the communities that we service, we again continued our strong funding advocacy with funding bodies and relevant members of parliament over 2024-2025.

Through our funding advocacy in 2024–25, we were successful in obtaining:

- A grant of funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner for a project that seeks to reduce the risk of women and children who have experienced family violence falling into insecure housing and homelessness (led by Women's Legal Service Victoria and in conjunction with Barwon Community Legal Service)
- A grant of funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner for a project to set up health justice partnerships at Mental Health and Wellbeing Local services (led by Mind Australia and in conjunction with ARC Justice and South-East Monash Legal Service)
- Continuation of our Family Law Access project
- Continuation of our baseline funding streams and a number of specific-purpose funding streams through the National Access to Justice Partnership agreement

These funding outcomes will allow commUnity+ Legal to further expand the services we deliver and outcomes we achieve for our communities.

Implementation of the student placement component of our African Australian Assistance Project

We further enhanced the outcomes we achieve through our African Australian Assistance Project by launching our student placement component of the program. This part of the program will see two law students/graduates placed with our project lawyer and community development worker as they work with African Australian communities in Melbourne's west, with an aim to increase the students' long-term ability to pursue a career in the legal assistance sector. Our first two project students commenced in early 2025. Our African Australian Assistance Project is a project funded through the Victorian Legal Services Board Grant Program.



Programs and services

In 2024–25, commUnity+ Legal delivered more than 2000 legal services, as well as community development and engagement activities across a range of different projects and outreach programs.

The following is a snapshot of just a few of the services and projects we deliver to the communities we serve.

Lawyer-assisted family dispute resolution

commUnity+ Legal has successfully operated a Lawyer-Assisted Family Dispute Resolution (LAFDR) program in partnership with Sunshine Family Relationship Centre and Monash Law Clinics for a number of years. Family Dispute Resolution is a type of mediation that helps separated couples resolve disputes about their children or finances. If a matter is complex, likely to lead to litigation, or the mediator believes one or both parties may benefit from having a lawyer present, they may arrange for LAFDR to take place. This often occurs as a last-ditch attempt to avoid the parties engaging in costly and emotionally taxing court proceedings.

Through our involvement in the LAFDR program, our Centre represents a party at the mediation session, as well as providing them with pre-mediation and post-mediation legal advice and assistance. Where an agreement is reached during the mediation, we may also assist the parties to formalise their agreement by drafting applications for court orders.

In 2024–25, 63 per cent of parties assisted with LAFDR by commUnity+ Legal were able to reach an agreement through mediation. This is significant, as all of these clients were victim-survivors of family violence experiencing financial hardship, and the majority were born outside of Australia.

Client spotlight

Pham's mediation outcome

Going through litigation for family law proceedings can be expensive, stressful and time consuming, and we try to assist parties in resolving their dispute amicably and avoiding litigation wherever possible.

Pham was referred to commUnity+ Legal by a mediator at the Sunshine Family Relationship Centre after she and her ex-husband, Vu, had been unsuccessfully trying to resolve their financial dispute for almost a year. The mediator was worried that their matter would not resolve and that Pham and Vu were very close to going to the Family Court, despite their limited asset pool and incomes.

Vu had significant mental health problems and had been reliant on the Disability Support Pension for many years. Pham only earned around $400 per week, had been subject to family violence during her marriage to Vu and was at risk of homelessness if she was forced to sell their home. Neither of them could afford a lawyer, and the only asset of significance was their family home. Although they had been separated for a year, they still lived together in the same house, as neither could afford to leave without a settlement.

Through the LAFDR program, Pham was represented by a commUnity+ lawyer, and Vu was represented by a lawyer from another community legal centre. Over two mediation sessions, Pham and Vu, with the help of their mediator, interpreters and lawyers, finally managed to reach a resolution that they both agreed with. The agreement allowed Pham to keep the family home after making a payment to Vu, and both parties were able to move forward with their lives, separately and independently, without the need for litigation.

Names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Emerging Lawyers Program

In mid-2023, commUnity+ Legal employed a new family lawyer, Farriz Roslan, through our involvement in Women's Legal Service Victoria's inaugural Emerging Lawyers Program. This program provides early-career lawyers with intensive initial and ongoing training and support and a placement in a Community Legal Centre for 18 months, with the ultimate aim of increasing family violence and family law assistance services in the communities where they're needed most.

Throughout 2024–25, Farriz was an invaluable member of the commUnity+ Legal team, assisting almost 300 unique clients with a range of legal issues across family law and family violence. Farriz also attended Sunshine Specialist Family Violence Court weekly as a duty lawyer to help clients on the day of their intervention order proceedings, provided legal advice, ran ongoing family law matters and participated in training and education. We are pleased to confirm that Farriz will remain at commUnity+ Legal after the program concludes in November 2025.



Melton Family Violence Project

Across 2024–25 we have continued to respond to the large and growing demand for family violence legal services in the Melton LGA. Through our Melton Family Violence Project, we provided more than 300 legal advice and casework services to people living in Melton who experienced family violence, including services provided through our health justice partnership at the Melton Health Hub where we provide holistic, wrap-around support to clients initially engaging with other Hub services. We also provided 25 secondary consultations to staff and a number of Melton family violence service providers, including The Orange Door Brimbank and GenWest, helping to enhance the capacity of those services to assist the clients they engage with.

Our Melton Family Violence Project allows commUnity+ Legal to provide targeted, tailored legal assistance to members of an underserved community, and is supported by the Victorian Government.





Client spotlight

Client counsel for Claire

Sometimes, a client may insist that they only need help from their lawyer on one single legal issue, and be hesitant to disclose any other issues they may have. This is especially true for clients who may mistrust the legal system or be wary of the law. It is important for a lawyer to recognise what other advice may need to be given to the client, and to provide holistic legal support.

Claire came to commUnity+ Legal seeking advice about her estranged husband, Ryan, after he physically assaulted one of their children. Claire had applied for an intervention order (IVO) against Ryan and wanted advice about the IVO process and how to navigate co-parenting with Ryan while keeping her children safe. At her first appointment, commUnity+ Legal provided Claire with advice on IVOs, parenting, divorce and property settlements, although Claire believed that they did not have enough assets to make a property settlement "worth it".

commUnity+ Legal assisted Claire with her IVO matters and parenting dispute, both of which resolved. Once Claire was ready, commUnity+ Legal then assisted her by requesting financial disclosure from Ryan, negotiating a property settlement by consent, and filing for an order from the Court to formalise their reached agreement. The financial settlement meant that Claire received a car, most of the parties' joint savings and half of the parties' joint superannuation. This provided financial security for her and her children. Claire even managed to obtain a divorce from Ryan during this process.

Although Claire had initially come to commUnity+ Legal for advice on just her IVO application, we quickly realised that Claire needed more comprehensive assistance with not just the IVO, but also parenting, property and divorce. Claire was relieved to have resolved multiple legal matters, and to have benefited from a property settlement that she did not anticipate ever receiving.

Names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Pre-court engagement service

Through our Pre-Court Engagement Service, commUnity+ Legal is able to provide more substantial and enhanced support and assistance to members of the community seeking protection from family violence. While traditional Duty Lawyer services only assist clients at court on their court date, through our pre-court engagement service our lawyers contact clients before their court date, advising them on their rights and options and what to expect at court, as well engaging with other parties on the clients' behalf to try and resolve their matter before it gets to court. This process aims to minimise the anxiety and trauma that comes with having to attend court.

Thanks to the efficiencies created by the project and the efforts of our team of lawyers, our Centre was able to provide 684 duty lawyer services to victim-survivors of family violence across 2024–25, with 327 of these services being delivered via our Pre-Court Engagement Service. This service is supported by the Victorian Government, with funding administered by Victoria Legal Aid.

Client spotlight



Supporting Skyler to secure safety

Attending court to seek a protective Order can be an intensely stressful and anxious experience for people experiencing family violence. Providing pre-court support and assistance is crucial in minimising the trauma involved.

Skyler is a victim survivor of family violence perpetrated by her ex-partner Bruce. Bruce has a history of multiple incarcerations for family-violence-related offences and had engaged in long-term use of methamphetamine and marijuana throughout their relationship. Bruce had even threatened Skyler publicly. Seeking an end to his abuse, Skyler applied to the court for a Family Violence Intervention Order for long-term protection. Skyler was so in fear of Bruce that she asked that her address remain confidential, as she wanted to ensure Bruce did not know where she lived.

Skyler was referred to commUnity+ Legal by the Court for assistance through our Pre-court Engagement Service. A lawyer from our Centre spoke with Skyler in advance of the court hearing about what the court process would involve, how our Duty Lawyer at court could help her on the day and other non-legal services she could link in with for emotional support.

At court on the day, our lawyer made strong submissions outlining Bruce's past criminal history, his threats against Skyler and the high risk to her ongoing safety. The Court granted Skyler an Intervention Order for a duration of ten years, providing her with the long-term protection she desperately needed. This outcome gave Skyler a sense of relief and safety, ensuring she would no longer live in fear of Ryan's escalating behaviour. Additionally, having a conversation with a lawyer in advance of court helped give Skyler confidence in the outcome and reduce her anxiety about the process. It also made her matter run more smoothly on the day and reduced the amount of time she spent at court.

Names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Looking ahead

The year ahead looms as an exciting period for commUnity+ Legal as we look to further increase our impact and assist members of our community in need.

Specific areas of focus will include the launch of new projects to further assist clients across the communities we serve:

- A project that seeks to reduce the risk of women and children who have experienced family violence falling into insecure housing and homelessness (led by Women's Legal Service Victoria and in conjunction with Barwon Community Legal Service); and
- A project to set up a health justice partnership at the Mental Health and Wellbeing local service in Melton (led by Mind Australia and in conjunction with ARC Justice and South-East Monash Legal Service).

We look forward to further deepening our community impact through these two key initiatives.

Wyndham Law Courts

Due to commence operations in late 2025, the Wyndham Law Courts will serve as a pivotal hub for legal and associated services delivery in the greater western region. commUnity+ Legal is in the process of exploring the delivery of Family Violence Intervention Order Duty Lawyer services at the law courts, which would further extend our Centre's geographical footprint across the wider west.

Tenancy law

In view of the high incidence of homelessness in Melbourne's west, and in the Brimbank region in particular, we intend to further develop and expand the tenancy law services that our Centre provides. This will allow us to better service community need and demand for assistance in this space.



commUnity+ neighbourhood



commUnity+ Neighbourhood

Our Neighbourhood House programs and services are shaped by lived experience, guided by local feedback, and designed to respond to emerging community priorities.

Since our beginnings, more than 40 years ago, we have continued to evolve and respond. The Neighbourhood House continues to build on the strengths of commUnity+, providing a broad range of educational, health and wellbeing, and social support programs. Through these initiatives, commUnity+ remains committed to reducing social isolation, strengthening community resilience, and creating opportunities for learning and connection.

A supportive team environment is central to our work at the commUnity+ Neighbourhood House. Victoria University students collaborate closely with the community development manager, community development worker and neighbourhood house assistant, volunteers, and community participants. This collaborative approach builds capacity, supports learning and ensures that programs are informed by both professional expertise and lived experience. Together, the team creates a strong foundation for delivering initiatives that are responsive, inclusive and impactful.

Our impact

Total number of Neighbourhood House attendances

4152

67

Programs in 2024–25

Service user strengths and needs survey



In Term 2 2025, 67 participants shared their experiences through our Neighbourhood House survey. Feedback highlighted the strong impact of our programs on health, wellbeing and social connection, with many participants describing them as life-saving and uplifting. The survey also reinforced the value of cultural inclusion, the dedication of our staff and volunteers and the importance of creating safe, welcoming spaces. Suggestions for growth, such as more exercise classes, group activities and cultural events, will guide our ongoing program development.

- **67 participants** provided feedback across a wide range of programs, including exercise programs, social groups and hands-on activities such as craft, art, cooking, gardening and community meals.
- **Age diversity:** almost half of respondents were aged 45 and above, with strong participation from older community members (34 per cent of respondents were aged 65+).
- **Cultural diversity:** 43 per cent of respondents identified as being from a CALD background, with additional representation from people with disability.
- **Program experience:** feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with a typical entry describing programs as 'a source of joy and connection'.
- **Impact:** survey participants reported improved health and fitness, reduced loneliness, stronger community connections, new friendships and increased confidence and skills.
- **Engagement:** many participants have been attending programs for several years, highlighting long-term community connection and trust. What keeps people coming? According to the survey responses: friendly staff, a welcoming environment, opportunities to learn and a strong sense of cultural inclusion.
- **Suggestions for growth:** more exercise classes (especially Zumba), larger and more private spaces, culturally diverse meals and more group activities such as cooking, dancing, and excursions.
- **Community perception:** the Neighbourhood House is widely seen as a safe, inclusive and supportive space across cultures and life stages.









Programs and initiatives



As a Neighbourhood House, we are committed to embedding a whole-of-organisation approach to community development. Over the past year, we have advanced this transition by aligning the Neighbourhood House programs, services and operations with community development frameworks and principles to extend beyond the Neighbourhood House to sit across all of commUnity+. This strategic shift ensures that community participation, empowerment and collaboration underpin all aspects of our work. By adopting a consistent, organisation-wide approach, we have strengthened our capacity to respond to local priorities, build sustainable partnerships and deliver long-term social impact.

Community development

Pathways in Place, Action Network

The Pathways in Place (PiPAN) project, led by Victoria University and funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation, is a multi-partner initiative designed to address the root causes of youth unemployment in Brimbank. Through cycles of action learning, PiPAN brings together partners including commUnity+, Future Connect, SheForce, Brimbank City Council, and WEstjustice to co-design and implement practical solutions that improve education, employment, and wellbeing pathways for young people. The project emphasises collaboration, evidence-informed practice and community engagement, with progress monitored through shared data and evaluation platforms. commUnity+ has produced case studies and collaborated on resources and supporting soft skills development for young people, ensuring that local voices and experiences shape solutions that build long-term social and economic resilience.

Melton Community Safety & Empowerment Project

CommUnity+ Neighbourhood, working with the commUnity+ Legal team, commenced the Melton Community Safety & Empowerment Project, a two-year initiative designed to strengthen community safety and resilience. The project focuses on preventing family and gender-based violence and reducing negative interactions between young people and the justice system. With a dedicated community development worker working in partnership with a commUnity+ community lawyer, the project delivers community engagement activities, legal education, professional training and legal support. By working alongside local communities and partners, the initiative is empowering residents in Melton and surrounding suburbs, to build safer, more inclusive communities. To date, the project has delivered 127 community engagement activities and two legal education sessions for community members in collaboration with Djerriwarrh Community and Education Service.

- **Locally led approach** with a dedicated Community Development Worker recruited from within the Melton community to strengthen cultural and social connections
- 127 community engagement activities delivered, including legal education for young people and gender-based violence prevention sessions
- 115 legal advice services provided and assisted 9 cases to community members identified through engagement activities.

Inclusive Communities

In collaboration with Brimbank Aquatic and Wellness Centre (BAWC) tenant partners – Good Shepherd, Distinctive Options, and Brimbank City Council – the Community Development team co-designed a series of programs to support specific community cohorts to access services. These included the Men's Program, Carer's Program, and Parents of Teens Program, which offered activities such as financial health workshops, navigating disability services, group fitness, cooking sessions, goal setting and personal reflection. The initiative demonstrated strong collaboration and cross-promotion between tenant partners, ensuring programs were responsive to community needs while fostering inclusion and connection.







Neighbourhood House

Throughout 2024–25, Neighbourhood House continued to offer a diverse range of free Neighbourhood House and community development programs, welcoming participation from all community members. Notable, continued and new programs include:

Patch to Plate

The Patch to Plate program's cooking workshops and community meals featured more than 260 engagements this year, offering hands-on opportunities to connect fresh produce from the community garden with healthy, practical meal preparation while strengthening social connections across cultures. Designed to be accessible and interactive, the sessions encouraged participants to experiment with seasonal vegetables, share recipes that reflected the community's cultural diversity and build confidence in the kitchen. Potluck-style meals extended the experience, fostering food sharing, cultural exchange and friendships. By integrating cooking with gardening, the program highlighted the full cycle of food - from planting and harvesting to preparing and sharing - promoting healthier eating, reducing environmental impact, supporting household savings and building resilience, sustainability, and community connectedness.

School holiday program

This year, we proudly launched our first-ever school holiday program. Designed to offer fun, inclusive, and enriching experiences for children during the break, the program featured a variety of creative workshops and hands-on activities. The response from families was overwhelmingly positive, with strong attendance and enthusiastic feedback. This successful pilot has laid a solid foundation for future programs, and we're excited to continue growing this initiative in the years ahead.

Walking Group

The Walking Group offered participants a gentle and supportive way to start their day with movement, mindfulness, and connection. Meeting regularly in the mornings, the group boasts physical activity and social engagement, helping participants build routine and resilience. Many participants report feeling more energised and motivated throughout the day, with one participant sharing, "Joining the Walking Group helped me feel less isolated and gives me something to look forward to each week."

Get Crafty

Get Crafty provided a vibrant space for creativity and connection, where participants explore a range of hands-on projects from painting and collage to seasonal crafts. The program fosters self-expression and relaxation, while also building community among attendees.

Men's Group

The Men's Group created a safe and welcoming environment for men to connect, share experiences, and support one another. Through regular meetings and facilitated discussions, participants explored topics such as wellbeing, social connection.





Community events

Throughout the year, we hosted and celebrated a range of events in collaboration with CommUnity+ staff, students and community members. Highlights included:

- **Eid al-Fitr,** marking the end of Ramadan
- **Neighbourhood House Week**, featuring a cultural community lunch and an interactive stall at Westvale Community Centre's Neighbourhood House Open Day
- **Reconciliation Week,** where we incorporated a film screening about local activist Robbie Thorpe and dedicated sessions into our programs to deepen understanding and celebration of First Nations culture and history.
- **Community cultural lunches** and community meals provide a unique space for people from diverse backgrounds to come together, share food and celebrate cultural traditions. These gatherings promote social inclusion, strengthen community connections and foster mutual understanding across cultures. Sharing meals allows participants to engage in meaningful conversations, learn about different customs and build a sense of belonging. Beyond cultural exchange, these events can enhance community well-being by reducing social isolation, supporting mental health, and encouraging collaboration and solidarity among community members. In essence, community cultural lunches have been a simple yet powerful way to nurture diversity, connection and cohesion within our Neighbourhood House community.

Looking ahead

In the coming financial year, the Community Development Program will continue to expand its reach and strengthen its impact through a series of key initiatives. Program expansion will prioritise engaging under-represented groups, particularly young people, while further strengthening cross-program collaboration within commUnity+ and with external partners to enhance outcomes for communities experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation.

- **Inclusive Communities.** While to date the program has been effective, looking forward, the tenant partner organisations will be focused on driving a coordinated approach to ensure any future program meets emerging community needs. By aligning expertise and resources, the partners aim to create a more strategic, effective and far-reaching initiative that will engage a greater number of participants and deliver meaningful, long-term impact. This partnership is not only strengthening current program delivery but also positioning the program for sustainable growth, innovation, and ongoing responsiveness to the communities we serve.
- **Melton Community Safety & Empowerment Project.** The project is committed to building on these achievements by expanding its reach and deepening its impact. Future initiatives will focus on strengthening partnerships with local organisations, enhancing culturally responsive engagement, and increasing access to early legal and safety support for vulnerable community members. By using insights from community feedback and program data,





the project will continue to innovate, targeting emerging needs and creating sustainable pathways for empowerment, safety and inclusion, and help inform service delivery across Melton.

- **Community development expansion and impact.** Building on a community development approach, we are working to strengthen partnerships to create collaborative opportunities for advocacy, community events and shared initiatives. These partnerships will enable us to amplify collective voices, drive meaningful change, and expand engagement with the communities we serve. By fostering collaboration, we are positioning the organisation to respond strategically and deliver long-term impact through joint advocacy and community-led action. Through this we also aim to increase the accessibility, relevance and impact of our work, ensuring that every program meets evolving community needs.
- **Any-door approach.** The Neighbourhood House is committed to deepening our "any door" approach, creating seamless pathways for community members to access services across all our sites. No matter how a community member first connects with us, whether by walking in, calling, attending an education program or the Community Legal Centre, they are immediately welcomed and supported. This ensures that all entry points lead to a coordinated and person-centred response, where staff understand the full range of services and can guide individuals to what best meets their needs. For our Neighbourhood House, this fosters a culture of inclusivity and responsiveness, where every interaction is an opportunity to connect people with programs, resources and community networks that improve wellbeing, learning, and social participation.



Client spotlight

Vicky Jara

Vicky Jara (who consented to being identified and having her words shared publicly) reflected on how the changes to the Get Crafty program (soon to be renamed Budding Artists thanks to participant Sofia) has inspired her creative journey. At first, she wasn't particularly excited about the program, but her curiosity grew as she learned more about each featured artist. "The more I read into it, the more fascinated I became. There's always a purpose behind why artists start creating, and it made me think – what is my purpose?"

Vicky now researches each artist before the sessions, bringing her own materials and printed information (in addition to the provided 'Inspiration Booklet' that each participant receives) to help her feel inspired. She's particularly interested in the legacy of artists - what happens to their work after they pass away and where it travels around the world. "You have two choices in the session: do something similar to what the artist did or put your own spin on it and make it your own."

She appreciates how the sessions are calm, engaging and full of discoveries, and shared, "I like how you (Jaxson) are as well - you share things we wouldn't have known about, and you're constantly asking us what we want to do. I'm fascinated by these people - you don't know their story until you dig deeper. I love coming here! I'm learning new things I wouldn't even think about."



Client feedback



Health & wellbeing

A life saver, I come in feeling down and **leave feeling with energy.**

Great for **health and fitness.**

Better **health** and **mind.**

I love knitting and its good therapy for my hands and being with other women. **It stops me from getting depressed and being lonely.**

My experience has been fantastic because **I've been able to relax with other people** and **feel happier** also through dancing my arthritis has improved. **Today I feel pain free.**

Learning & personal growth

It's given me **confidence to communicate** with people from all cultures. **Made new friends.**

Very good. I got acquainted with **different foods** and **recipes.**

Great. Very informative. Easy to follow instructions. **Lovely staff and participants.**

It was very good program, which **connects the community with different background**, and makes everyone happy to have **international food** and **know about different cuisine.**"

This program has helped me **improve my English** and **boosted my confidence** when speaking with others. I've also made new friends and **feel more connected to the community.** It has given me a routine and **something positive** to look forward to each week.

Community

Lovely. Warm. Accommodating and **facilitative friendly.**

It gives me the opportunity to **make new friends** and **giving back** to the community.

We **share meals**, some cultural things. I love it.

I was so happy to have lunch with so many people after a long time, **we talked a lot and took photos.**

Feeling that we are **one family.**

So good. I have been **alone isolated for so long.** It's been so amazing to meet people and see so many smiling faces. **Warms my heart.**

Staff & program support

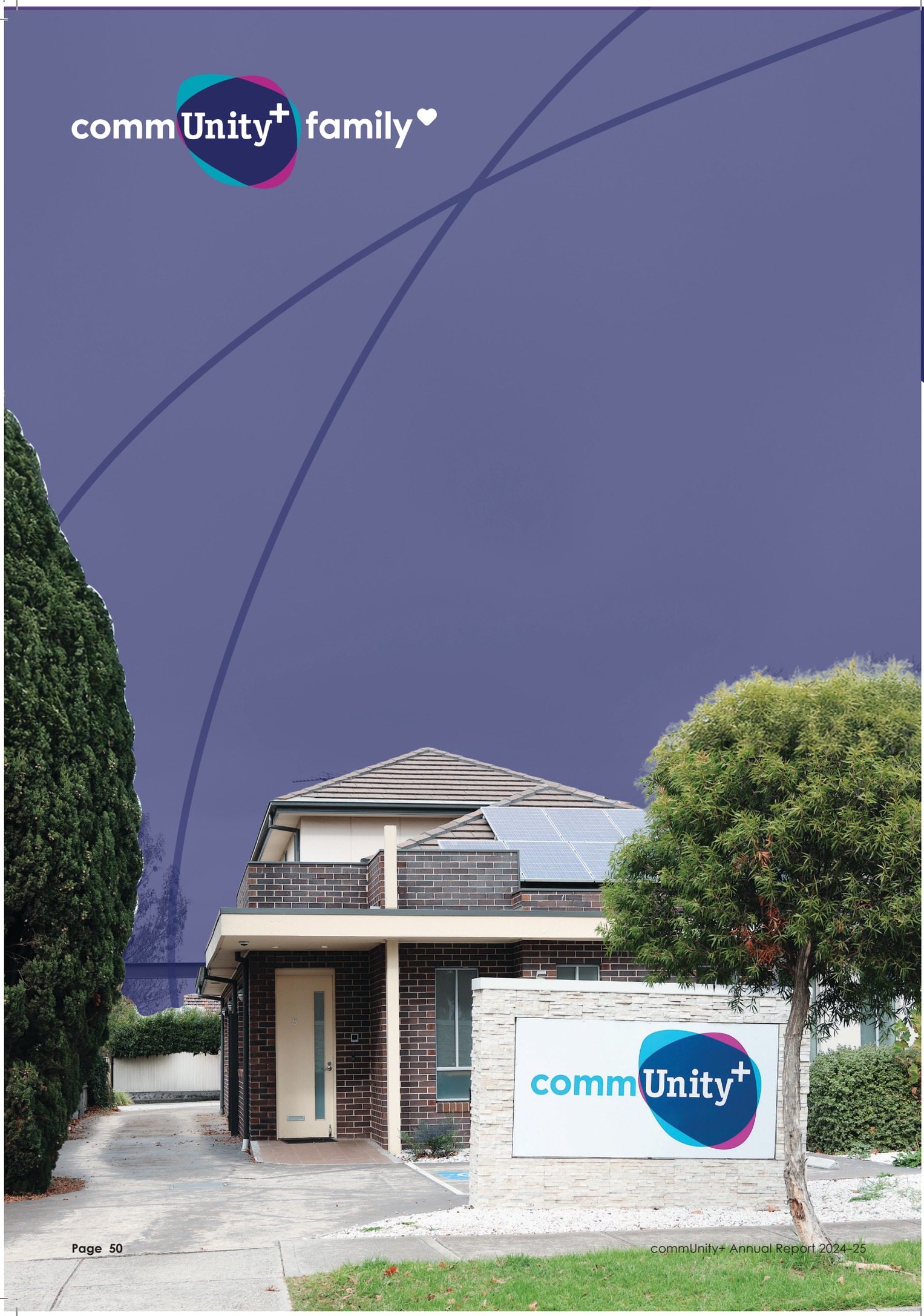
The staff are **helpful** and supportive.

As staff your doing a wonderful job.

I liked the program a lot because **I felt that the administration staff cared about the students** and tried to make us happy.






commUnity+

commUnity+ Family

The Children's Contact Service enables children of separated parents to have safe and meaningful contact with the parent they do not live with.

commUnity+ operates three sites across Melbourne's north and west, situated in Deer Park, Brunswick West and Glenroy. As a team, we bring experience, professionalism and compassion to everything we do, ensuring families receive the support they need, while keeping the safety and wellbeing of their children at the core of our work.

Despite the challenges of managing high demand and complex family dynamics, the Children's Contact Service has had an exceptional year, with increased service delivery across all sites. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our teams, we delivered an additional 351 sessions across the service.

One of the highlights of the year was being given the opportunity to showcase our Children's Contact Service to a Family Court delegation from Japan to increase their understanding of the role of Children's Contact Services in Australia's family law system. It was a privilege to be approached to assist with the court's involvement in Japan's preparation for the implementation of Japanese Family Law reforms in May 2026.

Our impact

Measure		2023–24	2024–25
Client sessions	Brunswick West	814	852
	Deer Park	801	957
	Glenroy	550	707
	Total	**2165**	**2516**
Client supported	Brunswick West	544	216
	Deer Park		346
	Glenroy	195	195
	Total	**739**	**757**



Of the **691 children** who completed our child-friendly feedback form, **93%** said they enjoyed their visit and would like to return.





Client feedback

The institution did everything to assist us on our processes moving forward especially on the benefit of my daughter in which she's exposed on some unfortunate circumstances not like the normal child. Again, I am sincerely grateful for the given approach

I really appreciate and thank you for the way you run the service, especially when you extended service for a short while whilst we waited for court. I'm really grateful for the service we received. Please pass on my thanks to the entire team

I can't thank you all enough for facilitating this when I needed this most. The kids look forward to this each week so much and without the structure of the service I don't think they could have seen their dad."

It was such a nice experience using the CCS. It reassured the children that things can be safe. I am so grateful. Please thank the whole team."

The service has been caring, flexible and professional which makes it easier.

You are so lovely. You made me feel good. I am happy I will be seeing my children.

I feel good and the service is well organised. I feel safe for doing the supervised visit with the children at the service.

Has been a great service for us to allow our child to begin safe contact with his parents after having no contact for so long

Good to have service that help families in situations like ours so they can have a relationship with the other parent.

I cannot recommend the team enough

Thanks for all the support, the staff have been wonderful.

Looking ahead

commUnity+ Family and the Children's Contact Service welcomes the development of an Accreditation Framework following the Family Law Amendment Bill passed in November 2024. Over the coming year, we look forward to contributing to this important process and advocating for a strong, transparent, and accountable system – one that ensures families receive the highest standards of safe and supportive care.

Following the recent announcement of a two-year funding extension, we are excited to continue supporting the unique needs of our families to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Client spotlight



Building bridges

The service supported nine-year-old Mary and her father, Mark, who were both feeling anxious about attending the Children's Contact Service. Mary had been separated from her father for three years, two of which Mark had spent in prison. Mark was concerned that the contact service environment would feel like being incarcerated, while Mary was nervous because it was so long since she had seen her father and she was worried that he may have changed.

Staff worked closely with both Mary and Mark to explore what would make the process more comfortable, leading to the following strategies.

- The first few sessions were kept short, progressing only when Mary felt ready. In line with Mary's request, she was not asked about school, friends or hobbies until she initiated these conversations.
- Mary and Mark were helped to understand that it was normal to be unsure how to connect with each other after such a long break and it would take time to rebuild trust in each other.
- Staff worked with the family's reunification counsellor from the Parenting Orders Program to ensure we had the same strategies and consistent messaging when working with the family.
- It was agreed that the door to the visit room would remain open to help Mark feel less confined.
- It was agreed that Mark could take a short break from the visit if he needed to regulate himself.
- Explaining to Mark that supervision was different to surveillance and that our focus was Mary's safety and enjoyment of the visit, not on judging him or policing him.
- Encouraging and role-modelling play-based activities, focusing on the present moment.
- Gently guiding conversations away from topics that were too complex or sensitive for the visit at that time.

The initial visits were awkward, with the worker leading most of the conversation and play. Gradually, both parent and child became more relaxed and engaged in open conversation while playing together. Mary began to share details about her life and her father felt more confident in resuming his role as parent. After six months the visits progressed to being supervised by a family member, Independent of the service.

Names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

The focus of the portfolio has been to strengthen its essential partnering, support and external functions, and focus on continuous improvement in service delivery, efficiency and outcomes.



Corporate Services

Corporate Services continues to evolve in every area of support it provides to the organisation. At commUnity+, business partnering has grown to involve program managers in budgeting and monthly financial performance reviews. This practice not only helps the organisation meet its budget targets, but also enhances financial literacy across the leadership team.

The Corporate Services team recognises that its purpose is to enable the business. To achieve this, we communicate and collaborate with program managers, providing expertise in tender pricing and writing so that service group teams can focus on what they do best: client service provision and program development and delivery.

As the organisation grows, Corporate Services must adapt and embrace a new way of working – being seen and sought by program managers for our expertise. Whether it's tender pricing, budget development, purchasing, IT support or branding and marketing collateral that aligns with our vision and mission, we add value to service delivery.

Finance

As part of a Corporate Services mini-restructure, we appointed a new senior accountant to deepen the team's expertise. This allows the finance manager to become more strategic and enhances collaboration with the business while improving financial literacy across leadership. The result is a stronger ability to achieve our financial goals and promote prudency.

Facilities

commUnity+ continues to invest in its facilities to ensure safe, functional and welcoming environments for staff and the community.

- **commUnity+ Legal relocation:** encompassed modern furnishings, upgraded IT equipment and an enhanced security system were installed, supporting high-quality client services while providing a safe workspace for staff.
- **Duress alarm rollout:** coverage now extends to our Deer Park neighbourhood house and education staff across multiple locations, reinforcing workplace safety, especially for evening workers and external staff who need immediate assistance.
- **Main Road West Hub upgrades:** new furnishings and carpeted areas downstairs create a more welcoming, professional environment for stakeholders.

Additionally, we developed a brand-new Emergency Management Plan covering the Main Road West Hub, St Albans Legal Centre, and Deer Park Neighbourhood House. The plan ensures rapid, effective responses to emergencies, prioritising staff, client and visitor safety while supporting operational continuity.

These facility improvements and safety initiatives reflect commUnity+'s ongoing dedication to maintaining high-quality, secure and functional spaces that meet the evolving needs of the community and enable staff to deliver services safely and effectively.





ICT

Over the past 12 months we strengthened our cyber-security capabilities. As part of the Skills for Employment and Education program, we obtained accreditation under the Right-Fit-for-Risk (RFFR) model developed by the Federal Department of Education and Workplace Relations (DEWR). This system evaluates an organisation's IT vulnerabilities and prescribes necessary controls.

The accreditation required additional resources beyond business as usual – resources that our Board authorised. These funds supplemented normal IT spend, allowing our Managed Service Provider to work closely with us to implement all DEWR-required controls. We successfully achieved accreditation by the end of the financial year.

Risk and compliance

Risk management is a core focus area. Our structures allow us to identify and eliminate or mitigate risks wherever they arise.

Work health and safety

A Work Health & Safety (WHS) Committee meets quarterly to review the health and safety issues that have arisen during the quarter; an incident register records hazards and incidents reported by staff or clients. Analysis identifies root causes and informs measures to eliminate hazards, which are then reviewed and approved by the committee.

Strategic & Operational Risk Registers: Both registers are periodically reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and discussed with the Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee of the Board. This ensures that each risk is understood and that additional mitigation measures can be implemented.

Marketing, communications and growth

The 2024–25 year was a busy one for the Marketing and Communications team. In November, we supported the Annual General Meeting. With an impactful keynote speech delivered by the President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, and former commUnity+ lawyer, Hugh de Kretser, we welcomed guests to reflect on the continuities of the commUnity+ story. We were proud to also have performances by leading spoken word poets Jude Chrisan and Tariro Mavondo.

One significant piece of work delivered with minimal disruption was the transfer of the website from Joomla! CMS to WordPress to facilitate development of integration with the student management platform aXcelerate. This website update also enabled more active management of the website in house as the year progressed.

The consolidation of our existing brand assets and the launch of a refreshed suite of subbrands was a major project that dovetailed with, and supported, the development of the 2025–28 Strategy. Following an extensive consultation and development process – with input from the Board, the Community Advisory Committee, staff and select stakeholders – the new subbrands were unveiled at the Strategy Launch and new commUnity+ Legal office opening.

Engagement with our local representatives remains fundamental to ensuring commUnity+ remains a leading community organisation, able to provide services and support across the areas of community building, community education, community legal and family services. Over the span of 2024–25, we were pleased to host and facilitate visits to our sites by:

- Basem Abdo MP, Member for Calwell
- Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Skills and Training, Member for Scullin
- Luba Grigorovitch MP, Member for Kororoit
- Steve McGhie MP, Member for Melton
- Hon Natalie Suleyman MP Minister for Veterans, Minister for Small Business and Employment, Minister for Youth, and Member for St Albans

Similarly, engaging with community stakeholders and promoting commUnity+ to diverse audiences forms a significant part of our work. We were pleased to attend various Council-supported expos and community events throughout the year to promote commUnity+ programs.

Social media remains an important way for commUnity+ to connect with diverse audiences. During the reporting period, we have increased the quantity of video content within our programming mix. Aligned with this focus on video storytelling, we were pleased to facilitate a Screen Media Victoria BA University student placement.

Looking ahead

Following approval by the commUnity+ Board of our 2025–26 budget in June 2025, our focus in 2026 financial year will be on delivering the surplus Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has committed to achieving in the budget. We will scale efficiencies to keep corporate overheads within reasonable levels for a purpose-driven organization. High on the agenda is reviewing financial policies to ensure they remain up-to-date and support our vision and mission.

To improve internal processes within Corporate Services, we have identified the need for an Internal Audit Program that examines one specific process at a time. In this context, at the end of the 2025 financial year we will release a Request for Quote to medium-sized accounting firms to conduct an audit of our payroll processes—our first step toward continuous improvement.

As part of the Business Plan for the 2026 financial year, we will explore modernising our intranet by leveraging SharePoint's versatility and replacing the current platform.

Finally, we will work closely with the business to achieve much-needed funding diversification. By examining community needs in western Melbourne and developing creative service delivery models, we aim to secure new revenue streams that align with our mission.

The focus of the portfolio has been on staff wellbeing, strengthening its essential partnering, support and external functions, and continuous improvement in service delivery, efficiency and outcomes.



People, Culture & Wellbeing

At commUnity+, diverse voices continue to shape our journey. We are committed to fostering a culture grounded not only in diversity and inclusivity, but also empowerment, collaboration, responsiveness and accountability.

This year we, as a part of the development of our Strategic Plan, identified compassion as a core organisational value that shapes everything we do. By embracing the lived experience of all people, we approach our work with kindness, care and courage. We strive to create an environment where everyone feels supported and empowered to realise their full potential.

Together, these values guide our actions and decisions, ensuring that commUnity+ remains a place where every individual is respected, heard, and able to thrive.



Developments and initiatives

Employee wellbeing

The wellbeing of our team remained a top priority throughout the year. Our Wellbeing Team—comprised of volunteers from across the organisation— continues to dedicate their time to listening to the voices of their teams, advocating for their wellbeing, and coordinating initiatives guided by our Wellbeing Framework.

The People and Culture Team, in collaboration with the Wellbeing Team, focused on fostering an environment that is supportive, encourages open conversations and normalises wellbeing and mental health as vital parts of our organisation culture.

A key highlight was the launch of Mental Health Week in October, designed to expand awareness of accessible, everyday strategies to support overall wellbeing of individuals. The purpose of this initiative was to empower staff with practical tools and knowledge, enabling them to proactively manage their wellbeing and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Employee experience

This year, we placed a strong emphasis on attracting, integrating and retaining talent. Significant investments were made to streamline our hiring processes and enhance the candidate experience through an upgraded online recruitment platform. These improvements have increased the efficiency and effectiveness of our recruitment

efforts and are supporting a more streamlined onboarding process for new employees. Collectively, these initiatives contribute to a more consistent employee experience and strengthen our ability to retain talent.

Ensuring a smooth and supportive onboarding experience remained a central focus, with particular attention given to the first day, first week, and first month of employment. This structured approach fosters employee engagement from day one and reinforces our commitment to creating a sense of belonging for every new employee. Our quarterly induction sessions are designed to be interactive and inclusive, giving newcomers the opportunity to share suggestions, strengthen their voice in the organisation and build confidence through strong connections across the organisation.

Employee engagement

Employee engagement remains central to our organisational culture. Our mid-year and end-of-year all-staff events have become highly anticipated opportunities for colleagues to enjoy each other's company, recharge and create meaningful connections.

The end-of-year event was particularly impactful, bringing employees together to jointly create a large-scale mural reflecting our future strategic direction. This activity required teams to work collaboratively and strategically towards a unified purpose, leveraging the unique strengths of each group to create a true reflection of a shared vision. In contrast, the mid-year gathering provided a chance to relax and build camaraderie through a friendly game of bocce in a light-hearted environment.

Over the past four years, our engagement survey data has consistently demonstrated year-on-year improvement across all measured elements. In recognition of this progress, and with a commitment to continuous enhancement, the organisation has made a strategic decision to begin benchmarking against industry standards and to actively learn from sector-wide best practices.

To support this, we have invested in an industry-trusted platform that enables comprehensive benchmarking – not only within our specific sector, but also across broader organisational and engagement metrics. This transition marks a significant step forward in our efforts to align with industry excellence and to further elevate our employee experience.

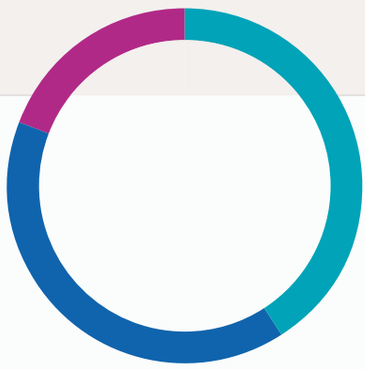
We're pleased to report that for the 2024–25 survey, the employee engagement score was 73% and the employee participation rate for the survey was 69%.



Employee NPS

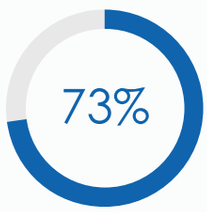
22

- 41% promoters
- 40% passives
- 19% detractors



Engagement score

Engagement is a measure of how positive people feel about their work



Reward and recognition

In December 2024, commUnity+ introduced a refreshed and expanded suite of employee benefits, designed to better support the diverse needs of our workforce. These enhancements reflect our commitment to fostering an inclusive, equitable and supportive workplace – one where staff wellbeing, flexibility, and cultural recognition are prioritised. By providing greater support for personal circumstances, cultural and family commitments and overall work-life balance, these benefits empower our people to thrive both professionally and personally.

We also acknowledge the ongoing success of the **APPLAUSE** program, which continues to provide a platform for staff to recognise and appreciate their colleagues. This year, there were 171 nominations from 43 nominators, reflecting a strong culture of peer-to-peer appreciation. Fourteen nominators were recognised for their outstanding contributions to the program.



Team diversity



The results of our 2025 diversity survey highlight our ongoing commitment to inclusivity and representation. Our team collectively speaks 36 different languages and represents more than 35 ethnicities from around the world. Employees come from 23 different countries, with over 60% being first-generation migrants. Notably, more than 15% of staff received their first employment opportunity in Australia at commUnity+, reflecting our role in supporting new beginnings and fostering a truly diverse workplace.

As part of our ongoing commitment to gender equality, commUnity+ continues to prioritise fair and equitable opportunities for all staff. Our focus on gender equality is driven by the belief that a diverse and inclusive workforce strengthens our organisation and better serves our community. This year, we reported to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency and are currently awaiting our certificate of compliance – a significant milestone that affirms our efforts and provides valuable guidance for further strengthening gender equality across the organisation.







Looking ahead

commUnity+ is committed to strengthening the capability and knowledge of our leaders to create psychosocially safe work environments and prioritise staff wellbeing. We will further educate our leaders on delivering a great employee experience to support the retention of talent.

Our focus on diversity, equality and inclusion will continue to grow, ensuring that every team member feels valued and respected. By continuing to listen to our employees through engagement surveys, with transparent results and collaborative action planning, we aim to foster a culture of openness and continuous improvement.

We will implement and update policies to maintain compliance and relevance. Finally, we will enhance performance and development through effective feedback practices, supporting every individual's growth and success.

These priorities are deeply aligned with our purpose to empower individuals and strengthen communities, ensuring that commUnity+ remains a place where everyone can thrive.

Our Financials

Statement of surplus or deficit and other comprehensive income

Revenue and other income	2025	2024
	$	$
Grants and other funding income	9,452,556	8,981,563
Other revenue	361,684	239,381
Total	**9,814,241**	**9,220,944**

Less: Expenses	2025	2024
	$	$
Employment expenses	(7,175,898)	(6,885,587)
Depreciation expense	(863,007)	(1,033,101)
Administrative and office expenses	(292,744)	(353,880)
Finance charges	(184,832)	(101,852)
Other expenses	(1,055,657)	(1,031,299)
Total	**(9,572,138)**	**(9,405,719)**

Operating deficit	**242,103**	**(184,775)**
Other comprehensive income for the year	**-**	**-**
Total comprehensive income for the year	**242,103**	**(184,775)**

Statement of financial position

Current assets	2025	2024
	$	$
Cash and cash equivalents	1,225,198	1,816,454
Trade receivables and other assets	786,301	817,119
Total current assets	**2,011,499**	**2,633,573**

Non current assets	2025	2024
	$	$
Property, plant and equipment	5,328,963	5,709,087
Total non current assets	**5,328,963**	**5,709,087**
Total assets	**7,340,462**	**8,342,660**

Current liabilities	2025	2024
	$	$
Trade and other payables	603,925	510,356
Income received in advance	417,496	419,349
Provisions	729,267	625,387
Lease liabilities	566,111	926,661
Total current liabilities	**2,316,799**	**2,481,753**

Non current liabilities	2025	2024
	$	$
Borrowings	-	1,000,000
Provisions	39,054	39,054
Lease liabilities	2,248,694	2,328,041
Total current liabilities	**2,287,748**	**3,367,095**
Total liabilities	**4,604,546**	**5,848,848**
Net Assets	**2,735,916**	**2,493,812**
Equity		
Accumulated surplus	2,340,616	2,098,511
Reserves	395,300	395,300
Total equity	**2,735,916**	**2,493,811**

Get in touch

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